

REMARKS

This paper is presented in response to the Office Action mailed June 15, 2006. Claims 1-5, 7-11, 13-14, 16-17 and 28 are canceled and no claims are amended or added in this paper. Claims 6, 12, 15 and 18 were canceled in a previous paper. Claims 19-27 remain pending in this application.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the aforementioned amendments and the following remarks. For the convenience and reference of the Examiner, the remarks of the Applicant are presented in the order in which the corresponding issues were raised in the Office Action.

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Applicant notes that the remarks, or a lack of remarks, set forth herein are not intended to constitute, and should not be construed as, an acquiescence, on the part of the Applicant: as to the purported teachings or prior art status of the cited references; as to the characterization of the cited references advanced by the Examiner; or as to any other assertions, allegations or characterizations made by the Examiner at any time in this case. Applicant reserves the right to challenge the purported teaching and prior art status of the cited references at any appropriate time.

II. ALLOWED SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner's previous allowance of Claims 19-27 is appreciated. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the careful review and allowance of those claims.

III. PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 11 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Branch et al. (United States Patent No. 6,746,264). Applicants note as mentioned above that Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 11 and 28 have been cancelled, thus making the anticipation rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicants ask that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) rejection be withdrawn.

B. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejects Claims 13, 14, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Branch in view of Gaio et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,901,263). Applicants note as mentioned above that Claims 13, 14, 16 and 17 have been cancelled, thus making the obviousness rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicants ask that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection be withdrawn.

IV. SPECIFICATION

As noted above, Applicants have amended paragraph [001] of the specification to update the current status of one of the applications to which priority is claimed. Accordingly, no new matter has been added by this amendment.

V. CONSIDERATION OF PTO-1449 (IDS)

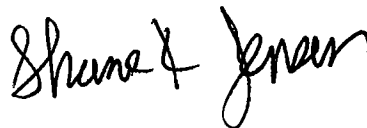
Applicants note that in this Office Action and previous Office Actions, the Examiner has not manifested receipt and/or consideration of the PTO-1449 filed by Applicant on November 2, 2004. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide Applicant with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe the claims as amended or presently pending are in allowable form and that every issue raised by the Office Action has been addressed. In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, or which may be overcome by an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Dated this 10th day of October, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,



ERIC L. MASCHOFF
Registration No. 36,596
SHANE K. JENSEN
Registration No. 55,301
Attorneys for Applicant
Customer No. 022913
Telephone: (801) 533-9800

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